

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 7412

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT GH

SUBJ: GHANA'S NEW SYSTEM - A MONTH LATER.

REFS: A) ACCRA 6672 B) ACCRA 6702 C) ACCRA 6739

1. IT HAS BEEN ALMOST ONE MONTH SINCE CHANGES REPORTED IN REFTELS WERE MADE IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GHANA. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT SO FAR ON EITHER THE EFFECTIVENESS OR EFFICIENCY OF GOVERNANCE, NOR HAS THERE BEEN ANY CHANGET IN POLICY DIRECTIONS, IT IS POSSIBLE TO COMMENT TO A LIMITED DEGREE ON THE CHANGES. FIVE AREAS MIGHT BE MENTIONED: (1) THE POSITION OF ACHEAMPONG HIMSELF; (2) THE PROSPECT FOR IMPROVED EFFICIENCY; (3) THE ROLE, IF ANY, OF THE MILITARY ADVISROY COMMITTEE (MAC); (4) THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF CIVILIANS DRAWN FOR OUTSIDE THE CIVIL SERVICE; AND (5) THE RECEPTIVENESS OF THE PUBLIC TO THE CHANGES.

2. ACHEAMPONG: AT THIS POINT IT APPEARS THAT ACHEAMPONG MAY HAVE
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STRENGTHENED HIMSELF BY WEAKENING HIMSELF. BY ASSOCIATING SIX

OTHERS IN THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SNC), HE HAS BOTH BROADENED THE DECISION MAKING GROUP AND DIFFUSED THE FOCUS OF CRITICISM. BY AGREEING TO THIS ARRANGEMENT, HE HAS PROBABLY INCREASED HIS LOGEVITY IN OFFICE BY SACRIFICING SOME OF HIS POWER IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN DISMISSAL OF A HEAD OF STATE IS IN ITSELF A RATHER MESSY SORT OF THING. NONETHELESS, ACHEAMPONG WAS AND IS STILL RATHER SHAKY. WE BELIEVE HE WAS UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE FROM WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES TO GIVE THE MILITARY A GREATER ROLE IN THE RUNNING OF THE GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT ACTUALLY THREATENED WITH A COUP, IT WAS OBVIOUS TO ALL CONCERNED, INCLUDING ACHEAMPONG, THAT SOME CHANGES WERE REQUIRED IF HE WERE TO SURVIVE LONG AS LEADER. THE NIGERIAN AFFAIR AND GOWON'S VITIT HERE HELPED CONVINCE HIM THAT HE SHOULD TAKE PREEMPTIVE ACTION. IT APPEARS QUIRE CERTAIN THAT ACEAMPONG HIMSELF DID NOT COME UP WITH THE IDEA OF ESTABLISHING THE SMC AS THE HIGHEST LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY IN THE COUNTRY. THE DETAILS WERE THE BRAINCHILD OF CHIEF OF DEFENSE STAFF OKAI AND THE SERVICE COMMANDERS. A CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP IS MADE POSSIBLE AND "CONSTITUTIONAL" UNDER THE NEW DECREE. SUCH A CHANGE COULD TAKE PLACE BUT FOR THE MOMENT IT SEEEMS UNLIKELY.THE CHANGES ALSO RESULTED IN THE REMOVAL OF THREE COMMISSION ERS

WHO HAD BEEN MOST CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH ACHEAMPONG IN THE 1972 COUP. ALTHOUGH AGBO, SELORMEY AND BAAH WERE NOT ON THE ORIGIKNAL LIST OF COMMISSIONERS TO BE RETIRED, THEIR VOLUNTARY RESIGNATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT PLAYED RIGHT INTO HANDS OF THE SMC, WHO WERE ANXIOUS TO SEE THEM GO BUT DID NOT QUITE KNOW HOW TO GO ABOUT IT. SELORMEY AND AGBO HAD BEEN OUTSPOKEN CRITICS OF ACHEAMPONG AND SOME OF THE OTHER COMMISSIONERS WHO HAD NOT PLAYED AN ACTIVE PART INTHE 1972 COUP. EACH OF THE THREE HAS BEE SUBJECTED TO STRONG AND OBVIOUSLY INSPIRED PRESS CRITICISM OF THIER "FAILURE TO DO THEIR DUTY". ACHEAMPONG THUS STILL SITS AT THE TOP BUT MUST SHARE POWER. AS TO OTHER "STRONG MEN" IN THE SMC THE NAMES OF AKKUFO AND BEAUSOLEIL ARE MENTIONED BUT SO FAR NO ONE HAS EMERGE CLEARLY.

3.EFFICIENCY: ONE HOPE FOR THE NEW SYSTEM WAS THAT IT MIGHT BRING GREATER EFFICIENCY TO GOVERNANCE IN GHANA AND ON THE BASIS OF ONE MOTH'S EXPERIENCE (PROBABLY TOO SHORT A TIME TO JUDGE FAIRLY) THIS HAS NOT BEEN MANIFEST. THE MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE SUPERIMPOSED OVER THE SUBORDINATED NATIONAL REDEMPTION COUNCIL (NRC) CONFIDENTIAL

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MAY PERHAPS IN THE FUTURE PROVIDE CHANNELS FOR A FLOW OF REQUESTS FOR DECISION UPWARD AND DECISION ACTIONS DOWNWARD AND MIGHT LEAD TO BETTER COORDINATION BETWEEN MINISTRIES AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT. THIS, WERE IT TO COME ABUT, WOULD IMPROVE EFFICIENCY ALTHOUGH IT WOULD NOT NECESSARILY IMPROVE EITHER RESPONSIVENESS (TO DEMANDS FROM THE PUBLIC) OR EFFECTIVENESS (IN GAINING WILLING IMPLEMENTATION BY THE PUBLIC). BOTH OF THESE ADD POLITICAL DIMINSIONS WHICH REQUIRE THE PARTICIPATION OF POLITICALLY SENSITIVE INDIVIDUALS,

SO FAR NOT ADDED TO THE MACHINERY (SEE PARAGHAPH 5). IT SHOULD BE ADDED THAT THE STYLE OF GOVERNMENT HAS IMPROVED. E.G., FELLI BRINGS MUCH MORE GRACE TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS THAN HIS PREDECESSOR, GARDINER HIS EXPERIENCE TO ECONOMIC PLANNING, KOTEL A LESS CANTANKEROUS STANCE TO INFORMATION. BUT THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN IMPROVED EFFICIENCY, AND GARDINER IN A STRONG SPEECH TO THE GHANA MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION ON NOVEMBER 6 SAID "MISMANAGEMENT OR LACK OF MANAGEMENT IS CRIPPLING OUR SOCIETY", HITTING PARTICULARLY AT COCOA AND AT GOVERNMENT CAPITAL OPERATIONS. GARDINER ALSO IMPLIED THERE IS INEFFICIENT AND HAPHAZARD ALLOCATION OF THE RESTRICTED RESOURCES OF GHANA WHICH BY FURTHER IMPLICATION INDICATES NOT ONLY THE MISMANAGEMENT OF WHICH HE SPOKE BUT ALSO THE FAILURE TO MELD DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS WITH POLITICAL GOALS.

4. MILITARY ADVISORY COUNCIL: THE ROLE OF THE MAC IN ALL THIS REMAINS UNCLEAR. THE BODY CONTINUES IN EXISTENCE AND REPORTEDLY AGREED AFTER THE FACT TO THE CHANGES MADE. EMPHASIS IN THE DECREE ON MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE COULD LIMIT THE ROLE OF YOUNGER OFFICERS WHO, IT IS UNDERSTOOD, WERE CHAMPING AT THE BIT TO ACHIEVE SOME DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING. THIS MAY COME THROUGH THE CREATION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEES CONTEMPLATED IN THE DECREE (SEE PARAGHAPH 5), BUT FAILURE TO ACCOMMODATE THE YOUNGER OFFICERS IN SOME WAY MIGHT LEAD TO TROUBLE LATER. WHILE THE DECREE STATES THAT THE SMC IS THE SUPREME LEGISLATIVE BODY, A POTENTIAL EXTRA-LEGAL ROLE FOR THE MAC IS FOR IT TO BECOME DE FACTO THE GROUP TO WHICH THE SMC IS ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE, I.E., AN AD HOC PARLIAMENTARY BODY DRAWN FROM THE ARMED FORCES. WITHOUT THIS OR SOME OTHER FORMULA, THE SMC IS RESPONSIBLE ONLY TO ITSELF AND IN BURKE'S WORDS ALL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE TO SOME GROUP EVEN IF THE GROUP BE COMPRISED SOLELY OF DUNCES. LACK OF RESPONSIBILITY LIMITS CHANGE OF GOVERNMENTS TO EXTRA-LEGAL FORMS. HOWEVER, IT IS CONFIDENTIAL

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STILL TOO SOON TO SEE SUCH A ROLE FOR THE MAC.

5. CIVILIANS AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES: THE NEW NRC DOES INCLUDE TWO CIVILIAN MEMBERS (GARDINER AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL). THE DECREE ANNOUNCED THAT ADVISORY COMMITTEES (BY IMPLICATION ONE FOR EACH MINISTRY) WOULD BE SET UP WHICH WOULD CONTAIN NOT LESS THAN TWO MILITARY OFFICERS, THUS INDICATING FURTHER THAT SOME MEMBERS WOULD BE NON-MILITARY (AND PRESUMABLY NON-POLICY). SO FAR NO COMMITTEES HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED. IT SEEMS LOGICAL THAT NON-MILITARY MEMBERS WOULD BE DRAWN FROM ELSEWHERE THAN THE CIVIL SERVICE FOR TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD SET UP A STRONG SYSTEM OF ADVISORS IN EFFECT ADVISING THEMSELVES. WHAT, OF COURSE, WOULD BE USEFUL TO IMPROVE EFFECTIVENESS AND RESPONSIVENESS WOULD BE FOR SUCH OUTSIDE MEMBERS TO BE DRAWN FROM AMONG PERSONS WITH SOME POLITICAL SKILLS, NOT NECESSARILY FORMER POLITICIANS, WHO

ARE STILL ANATHEMA HERE, BUT PERHAPS REGIONAL DIGNITARIES WHO COULD PROVIDE EXTRA-ACCRA INPUTS. FURTHER, THE COMMITTEES CAN PROVIDE AN OUTLIET FOR ACTIVE YOUNGER MILITARY OFFICERS. A MONTH SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH TO GET THIS PROGRAM UNDERWAY.

6. PUBLIC REACTION: DESPITE INSPIRED PRESS ADULATION OF THE CHANGE AND READILY FORTHCOMING PRAISE FROM REMOTE CHIEFS, PUBLIC REACTION TO THE CHANGE HAS BEEN VERY MUCH "HO-HUM". FEW SEE THE CANGES LEADING TO ALLEVIATION OF THEIR PROBLEMS OF RISING PRICES AND SCARCITY OF BASIC COMMODITIES. GHANAIAANS BY AND LARGE ANE STILL APATHETIC TOWARD POLITICS IN THE SENSE OF PARTIES AND PARLIAMENTS; THEY SEE THEMSELVES AS BEING BURNED TWICE IN THE PAST. HOWEVER, THEY DO LOOK FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN POWER TO TAKE SOME STEPS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS AND MANY SEE THE PRESENT REGIME AS FAILING TO DO THIS. WERE SUB-SURFACE UNHAPPINESS PROVIDED WITH FOCUR AND LEADERSHIP CHANGES COULD BE DEMANDED. SO FAR THERE IS NO FOCUS AND NO LEADERSHIP IS EMERGING SAVE POSSIBLY WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES THEMSELVES. THE PROGNOSIS IS CONTINUED BUMBLING ALONG UNTIL SUCH TIME AS SOME GROUP DECIDES THE BUMBLING HAS GONE ON LONG ENOUGH - OR, MIRABILE DICTU, EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS AND RESPONSIVENESS ACTUALLY IMPROVE.

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